

Heavenly workers clear neighborhood of trash



James Grant,
John Heim and
Chris Hansen
clean
Heavenly.
Photo/Heavenly

In two hours, seven teams of Heavenly Mountain Resort employees collected enough trash to fill an entire dumpster, with things like an abandoned truck frame, multiple old mattresses and car batteries.

On Sept. 23, nearly 120 volunteers from Heavenly canvassed the neighborhoods bordering Heavenly's California Lodge for the second annual Heavenly Community Clean-Up Day.

The goal of Heavenly's Community Clean-Up Day is to rid the neighborhoods surrounding the resort's base lodges of trash, making the neighborhoods a nicer place to live and visit.

The teams covered the area bordered by Pioneer Trail, Ski Run Boulevard and Keller Road , including all the streets in between and behind the California Lodge.

“This Clean-Up Day was very successful; we had twice as many employees volunteer compared to last year’s event,” Vice President of Human Resources Les Marsh said in a press

release. “It’s a very rewarding experience and an opportunity for Heavenly to show its commitment to and pride in this neighborhood we share with the community.”

Heavenly plans to continue the program every spring and fall, rotating between the California and two Nevada base areas.

South Shore transit chief arrested



By Kathryn Reed

BlueGo chief John Andoh experienced a ride he wasn’t used to – in the back of a police car.

Andoh, 29, was arrested Oct. 1 at 12:30am near Stateline by South Lake Tahoe police officers. He posted bail later that day.

Andoh did not return phone calls or emails.

His troubles started Sept. 4 when he was involved in a traffic accident with a bicyclist at C and Bonanza streets in South Lake Tahoe. The 58-year-old cyclist was transported to Barton Memorial Hospital complaining of knee pain, according to police Lt. Marty Hale.

Hale said Andoh changed his story about the incident while talking to officers that Friday of Labor Day weekend. As officers continued their investigation Hale said they

discovered things “didn’t add up”

From there a warrant was issued on Sept. 24 for Andoh’s arrest on charges of giving false information to an officer.

According to Hale, when Andoh was arrested Thursday in the 3700 block of Lake Tahoe Boulevard he told officers he lives in Sacramento. He has been working full time as the South Shore transit guru for close to a year. His cell phone has an area code for the Stockton area.

Officers tracked Andoh down yesterday when a call came in about a vehicle with its hazard lights on dragging a trash can. Hale said the vehicle was found parked near Stateline and Andoh was outside of the vehicle.

It is not known if Andoh was on duty when the various run-ins with the law occurred.

Andoh’s contract with the South Tahoe Area Transit Authority was already going to be the subject of closed session on today’s agenda. The board is Andoh’s boss.

STATA chairwoman Nancy McDermid did not respond to an email request for comment.

When Andoh was originally hired by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency he did not have to go through a drug test, have his Department of Motor Vehicle records pulled or have a background check. Those are things requested of BlueGo drivers – who Andoh oversees. He drives the buses and has access to agency vehicles for work purposes.

Some STATA board members had requested those documents be secured before discussions about his contract were to be deliberated today. It’s doubtful they reflect the arrest from a day ago.

Fire damages Lake Tahoe Psychic



Charred debris
from Lake
Tahoe Psychic.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

Lake Tahoe Psychic didn't see this coming â€” a fire Thursday morning that caused between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

South Lake Tahoe Fire Marshal Ray Zachau said the fire started when the heater came on because of the combustible papers and books stacked on it.

The call came in just before 8am. Fire crews were all leaving by 8:30am.

Zachau credits the police officers for knocking down the bulk of the fire by smashing out the back window and using a fire extinguisher.

No one was in the building when the fire broke out.

Garrido's attorney speaks out after suspect sends letter to TV station

By KCRA.com

PLACERVILLE – Phillip Garrido's attorney broke her silence Thursday, outlining the sensitive nature of the case and her client's communication with KCRA 3.

Public Defender Susan Gellman had so far refused all requests for interviews about a case that's drawn worldwide attention.

Gellman's client is accused of kidnapping Jaycee Lee Dugard from her home near Lake Tahoe in 1991, then keeping her in a backyard compound and fathering two children with her.

[Read whole story](#)

STPUD candidates square off

By Kathryn Reed



STATELINE – Eight of the 11 candidates for the South Tahoe

Public Utility District board boasted about their expertise and reasons voters should elect them during a noon hour forum Wednesday.

Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe gathered the group at Harveys to discuss water issues. Nearly 70 were in attendance to hear what the candidates had to say.

Jimmy Martin running for Seat 1 had an emergency that prevented him from attending, firefighter Scott Swift (Seat 5) had to work, and Eric Schafer (Seat 5) had former board member Chris Strohm sit in for him because he is out of the country.

Three seats are open on the Nov. 3 ballot, with all incumbents trying to retain their position.

Seat 1 pits incumbent Ernie Claudio against John Adamski, Chris Cefalu and Martin.

Seat 2 has incumbent Jim Jones challenged by Kenny Curtzwiler, John Runnels and Tod Williamson.

Seat 5 Schafer's domain, with Peggy Cocores and Swift wanting to unseat him.

All candidates were allowed to introduce themselves and then were asked the same questions before giving a short closing statement.

California mandated water meters and the Porter-Cologne Act, which requires wastewater to be shipped out of the basin, were wrapped into one question.

Seat 5 candidates went first, with Strohm (aka Schafer) passing.

Cocores worries about what it would cost to keep wastewater here and how difficult it would be to get the federal legislation changed. She recognizes meters are a reality residents are going to have to live with based on the state

regs.

Jones pointed out exported water can be used for fire protection. He said public hearings are planned in the coming months to address rates as they relate to metered customers. "Eighty-two percent of the cost of providing water is fixed. It has to be paid for by everybody," Jones said.

Seat 2 candidates Runnels said it's necessary for the district to continue to look for grants to defer the expense of meters away from ratepayers. As the largest user of electrical power in the basin, Runnels said he'd like to see the district's wastewater converted into electricity. But he's also in favor of investigating if the water could be used for snowmaking and irrigation.

Williamson wants to ensure locals are not saddled with the meter bill, since right now second homeowners are subsidizing locals to a great extent because of the flat rate system. When it comes to recycled water, he is worried about what it would do to Lake Tahoe.

Curtzwiler said his rates doubled when a meter was put in. He wants to take the fight to Sacramento. He believes the treated water is so clean it should be used in the basin. He said to overturn the act "it will take a lot of tenacity and bull headedness, which I have."

Seat 1 candidate Adamski said the focus needs to be on upgrading the water system, not keeping gray water in the basin. He would also like to see that water turned into electricity. He said the district has known about the metering for a while, and that it will take a lot of work between STPUD and ratepayers to make it work.

"The district has the flexibility to set the rates to meet the needs of the community," Cefalu said in regards to meters. He likes how the wastewater is being sent to Alpine County.

Claudio talked about how the district has tried to get out of the meter regulations because of being in a Nevada watershed instead of California. He is in favor of continuing to work on seeking an extension because of the short building season.

Salaries – that was the subject of the second question.

Claudio explained employee salaries were set based on surveys. “During the Angora Fire, firefighters never ran out of water because of the employees,” he said, pointing to their ability to do their job under pressure.

Cefalu said salaries will always be contentious in a down economy, and that there is a fine line between paying a person their worth and being overpaid.

Adamski is a former employee of STPUD who said, “It’s important not to overpay, but it’s more important to pay for experience. The district has more important issues than salaries.”

Curtzwiler explained the average compensation package is \$111,000.

Williamson also said it’s a fine line, adding, “You can’t bring in new people and pay them less and expect the same quality.”

Runnels said, “Salaries need to be reflective of the community, not the state.”

Jones is in favor of keeping salaries at a rate that will allow the district to recruit and retain qualified personnel.

Cocores recognizes nothing can be done about salaries now, but it’s the future that needs to be considered. “If salary increases cause rate increases, we need to look at it,” she said. “(Salaries) can’t be adjusted on the back of ratepayers.”

Strohm (Schafer) said the district is competing for employees with other agencies so it's important to have competitive salaries. "Eric is uniquely qualified with his CPA background," Strohm said of Schafe's ability to handle financial issues.

Another forum will be at the South Lake Tahoe Public Utility District office – 1275 Meadow Crest Drive, South Lake Tahoe on Oct. 6 from 6-9pm.

Parole system under scrutiny because of Garrido

By Jon Cassidy, Orange County Register

A month after Jaycee Dugard resurfaced and her alleged captors were arrested in her 1991 abduction, a spokeswoman for California's inspector general says the office will investigate the state's parole system — so that nothing like this happens again.

Phillip Garrido, who has been charged with kidnapping Dugard outside her South Lake Tahoe home when she was 11, was monitored by five or six parole agents during the 10 years he was under California's control as a convicted rapist, said Laura Hill, spokeswoman for Inspector General David Shaw. He previously was under federal parole supervision for eight years.

Authorities say Garrido hid Dugard the whole time in his backyard, where she stayed in a squalid encampment of tents and sheds at the Antioch home.

STPUD board member arrested

By Kathryn Reed

South Tahoe Public Utility District board member Dale Rise was arrested Tuesday morning on charges of obstructing a police officer.

“He wasn’t very cooperative,” South Lake Tahoe police Lt. Marty Hale said. “He tried to shut the door in the officers’ face. He was pretty belligerent and uncooperative.”

Three officers responded to the Rise home about 7:25am Tuesday because of a verbal altercation between the couple, Hale said.

“They were called by a third party who was hysterical,” Rise said the next day. “It’s a personal matter. I was defending someone’s rights and I got in trouble. I am sure the police report will not be accurate because of what did occur.”

The police report did not say who the reporting party was.

Rise said he believes officers “overstepped their bounds” and that he will fight the misdemeanor charge in court.

Hale said officers had to use a Taser on Rise.

Rise posted bail later that day.

Crews pounce on Stateline wildland fire



Tahoe-Douglas
Battalion
Chief Dennis
McLaughlin
plots where
crews are
fighting
Tuesday's
fire.

Photo/Kathryn
Reed

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE — Less than an acre of brush around the water towers that are about one-quarter of a mile up the hill from Loop Road burned in a late morning fire Tuesday.

The number of emergency vehicles in and around the area was mostly precautionary because of the “red flag” warning issued by the National Weather Service. With sustained winds of 25mph at lake level and gusts nearly double that, the wildland fire could have quickly gotten out of control.

Crews from Tahoe-Douglas, CalFire, South Lake Tahoe and Lake Valley helped with the fire on Bureau of Land Management land.

At one point the radio crackled with, “You have a broken hose, that’s why there is no pressure.”

Despite the glitch, the fire was contained shortly after reports of smoke were called in at 10:30am.

A helicopter from the U.S. Forest Service hovered above while ground crews extinguished the blaze.

The cause is unknown. The Nevada fire marshal is conducting the investigation.

A number of homeless people are known to live in the hills above the Stateline casinos. With overnight lows in the 20s this week, it is possible people had set a fire to get warm.

While firefighters did their job, Heavenly’s gondola whisked people to the top of the mountain and construction crews kept working on the Van Sickle bi-state park.

The Loop Road was closed to traffic for more than an hour.

A number of small fires have occurred this season in the area. Some have been blamed on people tossing cigarettes out of the gondola “ but none has been destructive like the 2002 Gondola Fire that burned 652 acres and threatened a number of businesses and residences in the Kingsbury Grade area.

“I-5 Strangler” confesses to more murders

Publisher’s Note: *One of Roger Kibbe’s victim’s was found dumped off Echo Summit near Old Meyers Grade. Kibbe’s brother, Steve, was a sergeant with the Douglas County Sheriff’s*

Department while the crimes were being committed. He retired years ago.

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

Roger Reece Kibbe, dubbed by authorities as the "I-5 Strangler," has pleaded guilty in San Joaquin County to six new counts of murder, including the killings of two Sacramento women.

Kibbe, 70, will be sentenced to consecutive life terms without the possibility of parole, thus avoiding the death penalty.

A news release from the San Joaquin District Attorney's Office said that Kibbe's age and the slow pace of executions in the state were integral factors in prosecutors eschewing the death penalty.

Read the whole story

SLT budget banks on more tourists, furlough days



South
Tahoe is
banking on
more
tourists
in its

proposed
budget.

By Kathryn Reed

Interim City Attorney Patrick Enright is investigating whether South Lake Tahoe could force its employees to take furlough days even if the unions say no to the proposal that is being negotiated.

To come up with a balanced budget for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, the city needs to close a nearly \$3.5 million gap in a \$72 million budget. Having city employees take 24 furlough days in the next fiscal year would save about \$1.4 million. This equates to a salary reduction of 9.23 percent.

Positions are being frozen and departments reduced as well.

"The biggest line item we have is personnel costs," said Councilman Hal Cole, who with Mayor Jerry Birdwell make up the city's finance committee. Cole described the deficit situation as the city "hemorrhaging."

Police and fire personnel are not expected to endure traditional furlough days. Crews clearing snow are also exempt in the proposal.

Councilman Bill Crawford brought up the fact that the budget calls for two city attorneys. Resolution on the Jacqueline Mittelstadt issue was not reached Tuesday even though it was an item on closed session.

City Finance Directory Christine Vuletich on Tuesday explained the numbers to the council during a special budget hearing. The council could approve the budget as soon as Oct. 6.

To compensate for projected expenses being greater than revenues, the 2009-10 proposed budget calls for using \$1.5 million in reserves. It's anticipated another \$1.6 million

from reserves would be used across the next three years.

Property taxes, hotel tax and sales tax account for the largest sources of income for South Lake Tahoe, at 23, 16 and 12 percent, respectively.

Just like in the 2008-09 budget, the city is projecting an increase in the transient occupancy tax. That backfired the first time, with TOT being down by 26 percent in 2008-09 or about \$1 million from projections.

Still, Vuletich said after the meeting that budgeting for a \$400,000 increase for total of \$4.5 million in TOT is reasonable.

"We looked at data from the hotel industry forecasts nationwide," Vuletich said. She said unemployment figures for the drive-up market (Bay Area-Sacramento) are lower than the state average, which is a good indicator people have money to spend on trips to Tahoe.

Her department also looked at the average TOT take for the city in the last seven years – \$5.4 million – when coming up with projected revenue.

Sales and property taxes are projected to be flat in the next fiscal year.

"Tourism is our No. 1 industry," Vuletich said during meeting. "TOT and sales tax are extremely volatile."

The bright spot is city campgrounds generated \$90,000 more income than anticipated.

"They aren't staying in lodging facilities, that's for sure," said Birdwell, who owns the Black Bear Inn.